



State of Connecticut  
DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

**TESTIMONY OF THE DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

**S.B. No. 504 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE SUSPENSION OF DELINQUENCY PROCEEDINGS FOR TREATMENT OR OTHER SERVICES IN MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT OR MISUSE CASES AND CONCERNING DETENTION OF JUVENILES.**

**H.B. NO. 7381 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING POLICE PURSUITS OF STOLEN MOTOR VEHICLES BEING OPERATED BY OR INVOLVING A PASSENGER WHO IS A JUVENILE.**

**H.B. NO. 7387 (RAISED) AN ACT CONSIDERING THE DISCRETIONARY TRANSFER OF JUVENILES TO THE REGULAR CRIMINAL DOCKET.**

**H.B. NO. 7389 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING CONFIDENTIALITY IN THE CASE OF A DISCRETIONARY TRANSFER OF A JUVENILE'S CASE TO THE REGULAR CRIMINAL DOCKET AND IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JUVENILE JUSTICE POLICY AND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE.**

JOINT COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY  
March 25, 2019

The Division of Criminal Justice respectfully recommends the Committee's JOINT FAVORABLE SUBSTITUTE REPORT for comprehensive legislation concerning the important issues raised in these bills and addressing the serious problem posed by the small number of juvenile offenders involved in very serious and dangerous crimes. The Division would reiterate the testimony presented to the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Security in support of the general concept of H.B. No. 7332, An Act Concerning Public Safety and the Welfare of Repeat Juvenile Offenders and Their Victims.

At the heart of the matter is the very real threat posed to public safety by repeat juvenile offenders, most notably those who steal motor vehicles. Not only do these juveniles pose a threat to public safety and to the innocent victims of their criminal activity, but they also pose a serious danger to themselves. The car stolen by a 14- or 15-year-old who leads the police on a chase or simply goes for a joyride quickly becomes a weapon, as the youngster does not have the driving training or experience to even attempt to operate the vehicle safely.

We are all aware of the increased incidence of vehicle thefts involving juvenile offenders, and frequently repeat juvenile offenders. It is no secret that in many cases a young person who steals a car is soon back on the streets having faced no immediate or meaningful sanctions for their crimes. While much good has come from the "raise the age" legislation enacted in recent years, it also has become obvious that some fine-tuning is in order to address the very serious threat posed by the very small number of serious repeat juvenile offenders. Again, we would stress that the issue is a small but very serious number of incidents involving a small group of young offenders.

As such, the Division supports the general concept of H.B. No. 7332, that being to revise the "raise the age" legislation to address the problem of repeat motor vehicle thieves. It should be clear that we are not stating that the "raise the age" legislation is responsible for the recent increase in juvenile auto thefts, but acknowledging that the problem does in fact exist and must be addressed. There is currently no effective means available for law enforcement and the juvenile justice system to respond immediately to the threat this small number of serious repeat juvenile offenders are posing to themselves and others. If the question is providing additional programs or treatment options, the answer is that there is no immediate option now available to get these young people off the streets before they can again pose danger to themselves and/or the public.

The Division recognizes the benefit of having cases remain in juvenile court as long as the juvenile court and juvenile court judges have the authority both at the pretrial detention stage and at the disposition stage after adjudication to provide for appropriate secure confinement when needed to protect the public and the juveniles. This authority and options do not exist today.

Any comprehensive approach to address this immediate problem should not be limited to motor vehicle thefts and exclude other serious and violent crimes. Motor vehicle thefts may be the issue of the day this year; next year it well could be armed robberies, sexual assaults or some other violent felony. The Division believes a comprehensive approach must address all categories of serious crime and provides for meaningful response by the police and the courts, and again, that the issue must be laser focused on the very small number of serious repeat juvenile offenders whose needs are not being addressed by the existing system.

In conclusion, the Division stands ready to work with this Committee, the Public Safety and Security Committee and all concerned parties to draft a JOINT FAVORABLE SUBSTITUTE REPORT providing for the comprehensive approach to the issues raised in these bills. We thank the Committee for affording this opportunity to provide input on this matter and would be happy to provide any additional information the Committee might require or to answer any questions that you might have.